

Message Text

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43

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1263

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1163

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, MARR, NATO, PFOR, IC, NO, UK

SUBJ: UK/ISCELANDIC FISHERIES DISPUTE: EXPANDED NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL

REF: OSLO 1076 AND PREVIOUS

1. I MET MARCH 8 WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND TO REVIEW
THE STATUS OF HIS EFFORTS IN THE COD WAR.

2. FRYDENLUND HAD VERY EXTENSIVE CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS ICELANDIC
POLITICIANS INCLUDING HALLGRIMSSON OVER THE WEEKEND DURING WHICH HE
WAS ABLE TO PERSUADE THE ICELANDERS TO MODIFY THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL
TO ALLOW FIFTEEN BRITISH TRAWLERS TO FISH UPWARDS TO ALLOW TWENTY
TRAWLERS. AT THE SAME TIME THE BRITISH HAVE COME BACK TO FRYDENLUND
TO

SAY THAT THEY COULD ACCEPT A PROPOSAL THAT THEY BE ALLOWED
TWENTY-FIVE TRAWLERS TO FISH. HOWEVER, THE BRITISH CONTINUE TO
INSIST THAT FOR IT TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM, THIS MUST BE
CAST AS A FIRM AND CONCRETE PROPOSAL. THE BRITISH HAVE
TOLD FRYDENLUND THAT THEY DO NOT CARE HOW THE PROPOSAL IS
MADE TO THEM -- WHETHER THROUGH FRYDENLUND, THROUGH LUNS,
OR DIRECTLY BY THE ICELANDERS THEMSELVES. BUT THEY DO
INSIST THAT IT BE A CONCRETE ICELANDIC PROPOSAL.

3. IT IS FRYDENLUND'S FEELING THAT WITH THE TWO SIDES ONLY
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FIVE TRAWLERS APART, A SOLUTION BASED ON PERHAPS

TWENTY-TWO TRAWLERS IS POSSIBLE. HE NOTES THAT HIS UNDERSTANDING IS THAT TWENTY-TWO TRAWLERS COULD CATCH ABOUT 70 THOUSAND TONS IN ONE YEAR, AND THAT THE TWENTY-TWO TRAWLERS WOULD BE THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF TRAWLERS FISHING OVER A ONE-YEAR PERIOD. THE ACTUAL NUMBER FISHING AT ANY GIVEN TIME COULD VARY AROUND THAT FIGURE.

4. FRYDENLUND TOLD ME THAT BOTH THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE ICELANDERS WITH WHOM HE HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS FEEL THAT HE SHOULD NOT INVOLVE HIMSELF PERSONALLY ANY MORE DEEPLY IN THE ICELANDIC INTRA-MURAL CONVERSATIONS OVER THE FISHERIES DISPUTE BECAUSE IT MIGHT BE READ AS UNWARRANTED INTRUSION INTO ICELANDIC DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. HE IS THEREFORE FOR THE TIME BEING USING HIS AMBASSADOR IN REYKJAVIK AS THE CONDUIT TO THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT. HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAS ASKED HIS AMBASSADOR TO INFORM THE ICELANDERS THAT THE NORWEGIANS HAVE "REASON TO BELIEVE" THAT THE BRITISH WOULD ACCEPT TWENTY-FIVE TRAWLERS IF THEY CAN RECEIVE A FIRM PROPOSAL.

5. FRYDENLUND STATED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE ICELANDIC CABINET WAS MEETING TODAY TO CONSIDER A REQUEST TO THE USG FOR COAST GUARD PATROL BOATS. HE ALSO HOPED THAT HIS TRAWLER LIMITATION PROPOSAL MIGHT ALSO BE DISCUSSED AT THE CABINET MEETING. HE PROMISED TO KEEP ME CLOSELY INFORMED OF EVENTS.

(6. AS AN ASIDE TO OUR CONVERSATION, FRYDENLUND MENTIONED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD ICELANDIC MINISTER OF JUSTICE JOHANNESSON HAS SAID THAT IF THE USG REFUSES TO PROVIDE ICELAND WITH THE COAST GUARD PATROL BOATS MENTIONED ABOVE ICELAND WILL ASK THE SOVIET UNION FOR THEM.)

7. COMMENT: FRYDENLUND WAS CONSIDERABLY MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR FINDING A COMPROMISE THAN HE HAS BEEN OVER THE PAST WEEK. HOWEVER, HE IS AWARE THAT THE BRITISH INSISTENCE ON HAVING A CONCRETE PROPOSAL IN HAND COULD STILL MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND A SOLUTION.
BYRNE

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